

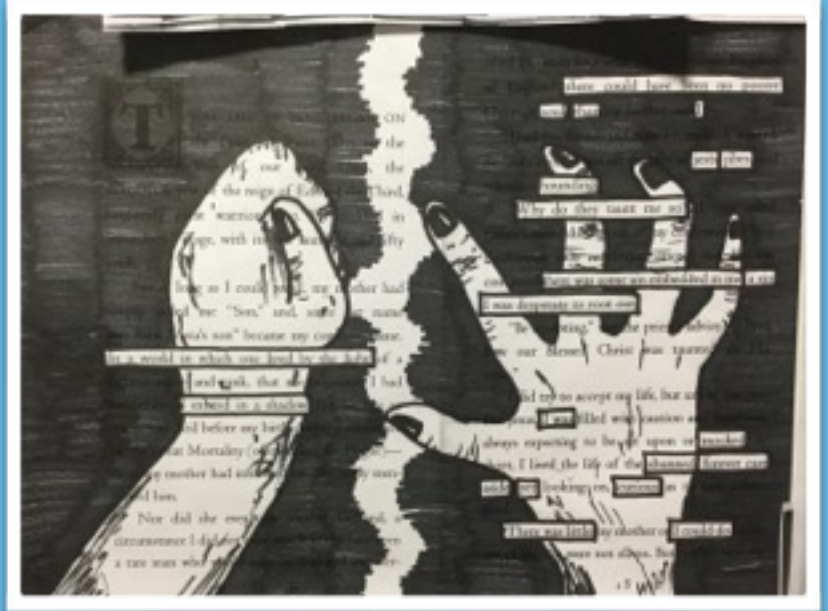
8 BLUE NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2016

ELA

kmlewis@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us

Students were challenged to “write” a poem that showed Crispin’s character traits by blacking out the words from a page of the book they didn’t want to keep. What is left creates a poem! We have some very talented poets! Students will be beginning a science fiction unit based on the essential question “what does it mean to be human?” During this unit, students will read either *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry, or *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury. These novels are both set in dystopian societies in the future. While reading, students will be focusing on analyzing such as symbolism, theme and character development. These novels certainly raise some interesting questions about society, and would be great for you to read along with your son/daughter! With the last unit, students wrote research reports to work on their expository writing skills. With this unit, students will be writing an argument piece that answers the question “is technology good for society?” They will incorporate information from the novels, as well as from non-fiction texts.



MATH

jcarlin@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us

We have finished our unit focusing on the Pythagorean Theorem. Students used the theorem to find missing side lengths of right triangles and then used the theorem to solve more complicated application problems. Students in the advanced math class have started work on a formal proof of the Pythagorean Theorem. All students had an opportunity to investigate an informal proof for the Pythagorean Theorem using right triangles, squares, and two puzzle frames. Our next unit will involve symmetry and transformations. Students will extend their knowledge of reflections, translations, and rotations. When they were first introduced to these concepts they may have referred to them as flips, slides, and turns. We will formalize the use of vocabulary and investigate coordinate rules associated with the different types of transformations. All students will have an opportunity to show their creative side when they design a visual representation that demonstrates each of the types of transformations.



SCIENCE

smilitello@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us

In Science we have finished our chemistry unit and our inquiry lab. The students wrote a full lab report on an aspect of the reaction between baking soda and calcium chloride. Ask your student about what he or she investigated. We have moved into Physics. Currently we are studying motion, including speed, velocity and acceleration. We will soon be creating and analyzing graphs of motion. We will investigate and graph the motion of a wind-up toy. Ask your student how average speed and velocity are different. High school may seem like a long ways off, but science course recommendations are coming up. There are five different classes for your student to be potentially recommended to from either Introductory (Conceptual)

Physics (3 different levels) or Honors Biology (2

choices). Hopefully you attended the Shrewsbury High presentation, but if you have questions about your student and course recommendations, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

SOCIAL STUDIES

namaral@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us

In Social Studies, we are currently about halfway through our Middle Ages unit(s). This historical period is the only one in 8th grade Social Studies that contributes to two report card standards: Analyzes the development of Medieval Europe & Explains the structure and decline of Feudalism. We started the unit by looking at the Franks and how Charlemagne's 'New Rome' almost prevented 'darkness' in the Middle Ages, but we have moved through the Norman Conquest and on to the factors that contributed to the downfall of the feudal system.

We will be spending some time not only learning about the Magna Carta and its effects both on Medieval England as well as our society today, but we will be combing through the actual primary source document in great detail. This is one of the most difficult documents that students analyze in 8th grade. It's always interesting for the students to see the correlations between the Magna Carta and our own Declaration of Independence and preamble to our Constitution. Starting with the Magna Carta, we will ask the question, "What events and ideas help bring people out of the Dark Ages and into the 'light'?"

